

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECORD OF DECISION

For

**FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**Fort Frederica National Monument
Saint Simons Island, Georgia**

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service has prepared this Record of Decision on the Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for Fort Frederica National Monument. This Record of Decision includes a description of the background of the planning effort, a description of the decision made, synopses of other alternatives considered, the decision rationale, the environmentally preferred alternative, a listing of measures to minimize environmental harm, a finding of no impairment of the national monument's resources and values, and an overview of public and agency involvement in the decision-making process.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The impetus for this planning effort is the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, Public Law 95-625, which requires the National Park Service to prepare a General Management Plan (GMP) for every area that it administers. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that Fort Frederica National Monument has a clearly defined direction for resource preservation and visitor use. General management planning is the first phase in a layered or segmented planning process. It focuses on why the park was established and what resource conditions and visitor experiences should be achieved and maintained over time. Decisions about site-specific actions will be deferred to implementation planning. The GMP is designed to provide guidance for park managers for 15 to 20 years into the future if conditions affecting management and operations remain relatively unchanged during this period.

Public Law 74-617 established the Fort Frederica National Monument on Saint Simons Island on May 26, 1936. The original Act limited the site to 80 acres and authorized the Secretary of the Interior "to accept donations of land, interests in land, buildings, structures, and other property within the boundaries of the said national monument...". It also authorized acceptance of donations of funds for the purchase of tracts of land within the National Monument. Congress, through Public Law 81-793, amended the establishing legislation on September 20, 1950 to increase the authorized boundary from 80 acres to 100 acres. Finally, on May 16, 1958 Congress approved Public Law 85-401, which increased the authorized boundary from 100 acres to 250 acres and directed the Secretary of the Interior to acquire, "by purchase, condemnation, or otherwise", the Battle of Bloody Marsh memorial site on Saint Simons Island. Furthermore, Public Law 85-401 authorized and directed the acquisition of additional marshland acreage subject to the 250-acre limitation, across the Frederica River to the west of the National Monument for additional protection of the historic scene. Fort Frederica acquired another 28 acres of land, including river frontage, on the south side of the town site in 1994. One issue this General Management Plan sought to address was how this newest addition should be managed.

The development of this general management plan began in November of 1998 with the approval of a project agreement document, which established the schedule, budget and team members for the planning effort. The Notice of Intent for this effort was published in the *Federal Register* on February 19, 1999 announcing the beginning of the planning process. The Fort Frederica General Management Plan public involvement process began the week of January 19, 1999 with internal scoping of issues of concern to the management and staff of the National Monument. During the same week the planning team met with state, local, regional, and federal agencies and private groups including the Georgia Division of State parks and Historic Sites, Georgia Coastal

Resources Division, Georgia Historic Preservation Division (State Historic Preservation Officer's representative), the Southeastern Archeological Center of the National Park Service, Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, Glynn County Community Development Office, Coastal Georgia Land Trust, Coastal Georgia Historical Society, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Frederica Association, and several Saint Simons Island garden clubs.

On May 5th and 6th, 1999 public open house scoping sessions were held at the Saint Simons Island Casino (not a gambling facility; this is the name given to a meeting hall owned by the local government) and at the Brunswick Public Library.

DECISION

After careful consideration of legal mandates, environmental impacts, comments from the public and agencies and the employment of an objective decision making process called Choosing by Advantages, the National Park Service has decided to implement the proposed action described as Alternative B in the Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Summary of the Selected Action - Alternative B, Life at Fort Frederica

Overall Concept: This alternative would emphasize the daily life, lifestyles and events associated with the inhabitants of Fort Frederica, the colonial military settlement on Saint Simons Island. The goal would be to give the visitor *some* idea (within the context of current laws regarding sanitation, solid waste disposal, air/water pollution, etc.) of the sights, sounds, smells, and other experiences that would have been typical in this bustling British Army outpost. Since the 1940's, at least 40 archeological field investigations at Fort Frederica have been conducted to reveal vital information about the people and happenings associated with this military settlement. Thousands of artifacts that were recovered through archeological investigations are housed in the Monument's museum collection and the storage facilities of the Southeast Archeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida. These artifacts, along with other information obtained through the field investigations, play an important role in telling the story of Fort Frederica to the visitor.

Archeological field investigations would continue to be an important attribute of this alternative. There would be a strong archeological research effort to provide information on landscape elements, lifestyles, important events and other features of the settlement. However, this effort would not involve the construction of additional labs or other facilities as in Alternative A.

Alternative B would designate the area presently occupied by the visitor center/administrative complex and the parking lot as part of the Historic Preservation Zone. As a result, when the current visitor center/administrative complex becomes functionally obsolete, the National Monument would seek authority and funding to demolish the facility and build a new visitor center in a currently developed or previously disturbed area that is not visible from the historic town site. The area formerly occupied by the visitor center, entrance drive, and parking would be cleared and reforested. Existing park residences would be converted to office and administrative space.

Entrance and access to the site would then more accurately mirror colonial conditions and experience. Although the relocated visitor center might be as much as 200-300 yards more distant from the town site than the present one, the enhanced visitor experience would more than counterbalance the slightly greater distance. This alternative envisions a visitor walking down a wooded path from the visitor center to the town site, gradually leaving the sights and sounds of the modern visitor center and parking lot and entering a different place and time where views in all directions would be uninterrupted by modern structures, vehicles or other intrusions on the historic scene. Although there would be no attempt to recreate the palisades, homes and other elements of the colonial settlement, the setting would be similar to that experienced by the original British colonists when they first arrived. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) concerns could be addressed by developing a new and improved visitor center film or video, new exhibits and displays, active interpretive efforts by park staff and volunteer costumed interpreters.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative A, Telling the Story with Archeology

Overall Concept: Because so much of the history of Fort Frederica has been discovered and revealed through the methods of archeology, this management alternative emphasizes the use of archeological methods and the tangible discoveries of archeological investigations to tell the story of the colonial military settlement and General Oglethorpe's urban sociological experiment to visitors. In addition, these methods would be used to interpret the role of the National Monument site in the development of historical archeology (as distinguished from pre-historic archeology) as a science. Active archeological investigations would be going on regularly as part of the program.

There would be approximately 5,000 square feet of archeological infrastructure including a lab to wash, screen, dry, number, and store artifacts in a controlled (humidity, temperature, insects) environment. There would also be office space for a curator and an archeologist as well as classrooms, additional exhibit space and storage space for equipment. The current archeological education program with the Glynn County schools would continue or possibly be expanded.

There would be opportunities for visitors to interact with archeologists on site and in labs, and with other park staff in positive and meaningful ways. Traditional ranger-led tours would still occur under this concept. Visitors could observe working archeologists and/or work as volunteers.

This enhanced archeological program would not bring visitors into physical contact with the exposed foundations and other ruins of the Frederica settlement. A strong educational element of the program would discourage visitors from coming into contact with the ruins. Some of the wooded areas outside the earthworks would be managed for natural resource based passive recreation. The existing structural elements of the historic town site would continue to be preserved but the areas around these structures could have active archeological investigations

going on at any time. The salt marsh on the western bank of the Frederica River and west of the earthworks on the east bank would be managed for natural resource protection with natural conditions and no visitor facilities. At the Bloody Marsh Unit, the wooded areas and marsh outside the immediate environs of the parking lot and interpretive exhibits would be managed for natural resource based passive recreation.

Alternative C, The Whole Story

Overall Concept: This alternative would place the National Monument in the broader context of other southeast coastal history and would place more emphasis on interpreting the role of the Fort Frederica site in the history of the region. The present scene would not be altered in any way. Rather, other historical periods would be added to the interpretation of the site. While the primary focus of interpretation at Fort Frederica would still be on the colonial period, the interpretation of pre-European, post-contact, and plantation period themes would be expanded. This broader range of stories, although related to the site of Fort Frederica, would have a more regional perspective and therefore more regional partnerships would be established to facilitate this broader interpretive program.

Under this alternative the visitor service zone would have to accommodate an expanded interpretive story. Therefore, expansion of the visitor center would be considered. Alternatively, the National Monument's administrative offices could be relocated (possibly to converted park residences) to permit expansion of the interpretive mission within the existing facility. This expanded interpretive mission would provide an additional opportunity to discourage visitors from coming into contact with ruins. Dispersal of visitor services throughout the visitor services zone or an offsite location of a visitor center would also be possible in this concept. Archeology, both active excavation and the use of existing archeologically derived data, would be an important tool used to reveal information about other historical periods. Advisory groups of indigenous peoples and other groups with historic ties to the area would be consulted.

Under this alternative the entrance, approach, and scene would be identical to current conditions. There would be the possibility of new signs, wayside exhibits and interpretive programs to present stories about historical periods outside the colonial period on the Frederica site. The visitor would have the opportunity to spend more time in the visitor center/museum due to the presence of more displays, exhibits and media dealing with the expanded range of historical periods being interpreted. Partnerships with other historical sites in the region would also be possible allowing visitors to visit several sites in a coordinated, planned manner to get the maximum benefit from the expansion of stories being told.

There would be an expanded effort to educate visitors about the potential damage to cultural resources from contacting them. Protection of marshes and upland forest would be the same as in Alternatives A and B.

Alternative D, No Action

The so-called “no action” alternative in the context of a General Management Plan actually means continuing present management policies and practices into the future. It provides a baseline from which to compare other alternatives, to evaluate the magnitude of proposed changes, and to measure the environmental effects of those changes. The final Environmental Impact Statement for the Fort Frederica GMP analyzes impacts from the continuation of current management in the same manner that it treats the impacts from the “action” alternatives.

DECISION RATIONALE

The major federal laws and policies that apply to federal agency actions in the Final General Management Plan are the National Park Service Organic Act and General Authorities Act, Public Law 74-617 establishing Fort Frederica National Monument, the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, the National Environmental Policy Act, and related provisions of the NPS *Management Policies 2001*. The management actions selected comply with the requirements of federal law, including those statutes listed above.

The provisions of the NPS Organic Act and the NPS General Authorities Act of 1970, as amended, provide the most important statutory directive for the National Park Service. The Organic Act requires that park resources and values be managed in a manner that will leave them unimpaired for future generations. The General Authorities Act prohibits managing units of the National Park System in derogation of the values and purposes for which the various areas have been established, except as Congress may directly and specifically provide. The National Park Service considers these two mandates (no impairment and no derogation) as defining a single standard for the management of the National Park System.

National Park Service *Management Policies 2001* provides guidance for interpreting the NPS Organic Act and the 1978 amendments to the General Authorities Act. Generally, these two provisions direct the Secretary of the Interior to manage parks for conservation purposes and public enjoyment without impairment. The mandate to conserve park resources and values is separate from the prohibition on impairment. The conservation mandate, thus, applies even when there is no risk that park resources or values may be impaired.

Providing opportunities for public enjoyment of park resources and values to the people of the United States is a fundamental part of the NPS mission. This includes people who directly experience parks and those who appreciate them from afar. It also includes deriving benefit and inspiration from parks. Congress has provided that when there is a conflict between conserving resources and values and providing for enjoyment of them, conservation is to be predominant.

Although park managers must seek ways to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on park resources and values, they have the discretion to allow impacts when necessary to fulfill the purposes of the park. This discretion exists, however, only so long as the impact does not constitute an impairment of the affected resources or values. The sole exception is an activity specifically mandated by Congress that would cause impairment or derogation.

Under Alternative B the potential damage or destruction to buried cultural resources due to temporary field investigations is less than under Alternatives A and C but greater than under current management. The impacts on vegetation and small animal habitat from the construction of a new visitor center would be about the same as for the construction of archeological facilities under Alternative A but greater than for the expansion of the current visitor center under Alternative C and much greater than under current management. Finally, the adverse impact on the soundscape of the National Monument would be about the same as for Alternative A but greater than either Alternative C or current management. The intensity of the impacts resulting from most actions connected with Alternative B have been determined to be either negligible or low. These impacts are due either to archeological field investigations or construction of new facilities. The one impact that rises to the medium intensity level would be the potential impact on the West Indian Manatee, an endangered species, resulting from the construction of a dock and continuing tour boat operations in the Frederica River. In all cases the mitigation activities proposed in the GMP/EIS would further reduce the intensity of these impacts so that the integrity of the National Monument's resources and values would be maintained and there would be no loss of opportunity for present or future generations to enjoy these resources and values. Therefore, there would be no impairment of the National Monument's resources resulting from this alternative.

The action alternatives in the GMP were developed by the planning team in response to issues and concerns that were raised during the scoping process. The planning team then paired issues with other issues that expressed opposing viewpoints to produce the following list of major decision points, which were the questions to be answered by the plan:

1. Can managers of the National Monument portray the urban environment of the colonial Frederica period while preserving the appearance of isolation and sense of antiquity that visitors frequently cite as an important element of the Frederica experience?
2. Can managers of the National Monument provide additional visitor access facilities from the Frederica River without unacceptable negative impacts on the Monument's natural and cultural resources and the viewshed from the town site?
3. Should managers of the National Monument preserve archeological resources in place (i.e. unexcavated) or pursue an active archeology and data recovery program?
4. Should the existing visitor center/park office complex be relocated to protect resources and the view of the historic scene?
5. Can park resources be protected from tremendous growth and development outside its boundaries without boundary expansion?

The major park values potentially at stake are those things that could be changed as a result of decisions made through the planning process. They represent tradeoffs between competing values and form the basis for identifying impact topics in the environmental impact statement for this plan. The values potentially at stake for Fort Frederica are:

1. Long term preservation of archeological/cultural/natural resources.
2. Preservation of the aesthetic beauty and sensory experiences of the site and sense of antiquity.
3. Visitor understanding and appreciation of the period of significance (urban design, social experiment, Oglethorpe involvement, etc.).
4. Preservation of the integrity of the approach to the National Monument from Frederica Rd. and the view toward the marsh.
5. Using archeology to educate present and future generations about the past.
6. Physical access to the site to experience the environment of the settlement.

The planning team developed and analyzed three management alternatives based on these decision points and values potentially at stake. Once the details of the three alternatives plus the “no-action” alternative were completed, the team employed 15 factors to compare and evaluate the alternative management concepts.

1. Degree of impact resulting from NPS activity on below ground archeological resources. Less impact is preferred.
2. Degree the concept incorporates living history interpretations. Greater degree is preferred.
3. Degree to which concept incorporates ongoing archeological interpretation and education. Greater degree is better.
4. Degree to which the concept is tolerant of or supportive of the display of interpretive exhibits such as traditional multimedia and wayside (non-personal services). Greater degree is preferred.
5. Opportunity to enjoy peaceful, quiet environment and experience a sense of antiquity. More opportunity is preferred.
6. Degree to which the concept enables the visitor to sense the bustling nature of the colonial community. Greater degree is preferred.
7. Degree to which the Bloody Marsh site is integrated into the management concept. Greater degree is preferred.

8. Impact of non-colonial period intrusions (e.g. visitor center, boardwalk, wayside exhibits, etc.) on the historic scene from the middle of the town site. Less impact is preferred.
9. Impact on the existing canopy of live oak trees. Less impact is preferred.
10. Degree to which the concept provides opportunities for visitors to have “hands-on” experiences. Greater degree is preferred.
11. Degree to which the concept provides opportunities for regional partnerships with non-profit organizations and other public agencies. Greater degree is preferred.
12. Potential of the concept to reach and attract a diverse audience. Higher potential is preferred.
13. Potential of the concept to reach and attract a specialized audience. Higher potential is preferred.
14. Potential of the concept to increase the visitor’s length of stay in the park. Higher potential is preferred.
15. Impact of non-colonial period intrusions (e.g. visitor center, parking lot, utility building, etc.) on the historic scene from Military Road and the Burial Ground. Less impact is preferred.

These factors measured the degree to which each alternative enhanced or negatively impacted natural and cultural resources of the national monument as well as the effects on visitor experiences and visitor services from a variety of perspectives. Based on this analysis the planning team determined that Alternative B best answered the questions raised in the decision points and achieved the balance expressed in the values potentially at stake.

MITIGATION MEASURES

NPS has identified and incorporated into the selected action all practical measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts that could result from its implementation. These measures are presented in detail for each alternative in the *Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. For Alternative B, the NPS selected alternative, the following section presents the proposed mitigation measures for each action with a potential environmental impact.

Action – Permit archeological field investigations in areas around and between exposed foundations and other structural remnants of Fort Frederica.

Mitigation: archeological survey and testing, recovery and preservation of artifacts, replanting of grasses and other ground covers, shrubs, and trees.

Action - The construction of the dock and the operation of the tour boat could have an adverse impact on the endangered manatee, which has been sighted in the river. These activities could also have impacts on archeological resources that could be buried in the riverbank or under the river bottom. In the 260 years since the decline of the Fort Frederica settlement, the Frederica River has eroded part of the bluff on which one of the bastions of the fort stood. Therefore, it is possible that artifacts from that era are buried in the river bottom or the riverbank near the proposed dock.

Mitigation of impacts on manatees: During construction the National Park Service and its contractors would fully comply with manatee protection measures required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. After construction, the tour boat operator would also be required to comply with these measures. They are spelled out in Appendix B of the Final GMP/EIS. The National Monument would also consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service during project planning and implementation.

Mitigation of impacts on archeological resources: Prior to any construction activities associated with a dock, the National Monument would arrange to have the Southeast Archeological Center and the Submerged Cultural Resources Unit of the National Park Service conduct intensive archeological surveys of the affected area. These surveys would enable the National Park Service to determine whether impairment would occur from the construction and to recover and preserve artifacts. In addition, tour boats would be required to operate with no wake and at idle speed near the dock.

Action - Remove the current visitor center and administrative complex from its current location and build a new facility outside the viewshed of the historic town site. Clearing of vegetation including some mature trees. Ground disturbance. Possible damage to archeological resources. Temporary noise, dust, and disruption of small animal habitat.

Mitigation: Noise and dust abatement measures, landscaping to replace lost vegetation. Archeological survey. Current area occupied by visitor center/administrative complex and parking would be replanted with native trees and shrubs and allowed to revert to a natural forested condition.

Action – When the current visitor center and administrative complex become functionally obsolete, remove them from current location and build a new facility outside the viewshed of the historic town site. Clearing of vegetation including some mature trees. Ground disturbance. Possible damage to archeological resources. Temporary noise, dust, and disruption of small animal habitat.

Mitigation: Noise and dust abatement measures, landscaping to replace lost vegetation. Archeological survey. Current area occupied by visitor center/administrative complex and parking would be replanted with native trees and shrubs and allowed to revert to a natural forested condition.

FINDING OF NO IMPAIRMENT OF FORT FREDERICA'S RESOURCES AND VALUES

Conclusion: Under Alternative B the potential damage or destruction to buried cultural resources due to temporary field investigations is less than under Alternatives A and C but greater than under current management. The impacts on vegetation and small animal habitat from the construction of a new visitor center would be about the same as for the construction of archeological facilities under Alternative A but greater than for the expansion of the current visitor center under Alternative C and much greater than under current management. Finally, the adverse impact on the soundscape of the National Monument would be about the same as for Alternative A but greater than either Alternative C or current management. The intensity of the impacts resulting from most actions connected with Alternative B have been determined to be either negligible or low. These impacts are due either to archeological field investigations or construction of new facilities. The one impact that rises to the medium intensity level would be the potential impact on the West Indian Manatee, an endangered species, resulting from the construction of a dock and continuing tour boat operations in the Frederica River. In all cases the mitigation activities proposed in the preceding narrative would further reduce the intensity of these impacts so that the integrity of the National Monument's resources and values would be maintained and there would be no loss of opportunity for present or future generations to enjoy these resources and values. Therefore, there would be no impairment of the National Monument's resources resulting from this alternative.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The Council on Environmental Quality defines the Environmentally Preferred Alternative as "the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources." It should take into account mitigating measures and opportunities to improve the quality of visitor experience as part of the environment. For the Fort Frederica National Monument General Management Plan the National Park Service's preferred alternative, Alternative B, is also the environmentally preferred alternative.

Each action alternative contains a proposal for construction of visitor and/or administrative facilities ranging from archeological labs, exhibits, and office space in Alternative A to a new visitor center and possible dock in Alternative B to an expansion of the existing visitor center in Alternative C. Archeological field investigations, which entail ground disturbance as well as potential damage to buried cultural resources, are features to varying degrees in each of the action alternatives as well as the "no action" or current conditions alternative, Alternative D. Each of these management alternatives (including the "no action" alternative) will produce both temporary and permanent impacts, and although minor, there would be some adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources within the boundary of the National Monument.

Alternative B has a slightly greater potential for localized impacts and site disturbance than the "no action" alternative, Alternative D. However, its potential for a substantially enhanced visitor experience and its implementation of mitigation measures proposed for archeological field investigations and construction activities will result in the least damage to the biological and

physical environment and the best protection, preservation, and enhancement of historic, cultural, and natural resources.

Furthermore, routine resource protection activities, such as monitoring and inspection of the historic ruins, monitoring and stabilization of the Frederica River bank, and management of the 1994 28-acre acquisition south of the Frederica town site, are identical under all alternatives.

Also, Alternative B more successfully addresses important management and visitor experience issues that surfaced during the scoping period for this General Management Plan. Principal among these are the following:

1. How should the National Monument manage the 28-acres of woodland south of the Frederica town site that were acquired in 1994?
2. How can managers of the National Monument portray the urban environment of the colonial Frederica period while preserving the appearance of isolation and sense of antiquity that visitors that visitors frequently cite as an important element of the Frederica experience?
3. Should the existing visitor center/administrative office complex be relocated to protect resources and the view of the historic scene?
4. The current administrative offices are inadequate in terms of office space for rangers, storage space and record keeping space.

The planning team employed the Choosing by Advantages process as an objective method for evaluating all alternatives including the “no action” alternative. This process produced the conclusion that Alternative B best addressed these and other management issues while resulting in no impairment of the values and resources for which Fort Frederica National Monument was established.

SECTION 7 OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The description of the selected alternative (Alternative B) of the Final General Management Plan includes the possibility of the construction of a dock on the Frederica River to permit tour boats to bring visitors to the site in the same manner experienced by the original settlers. Because the endangered West Indian Manatee has been sighted in the Frederica River, the National Park Service has complied with the consultation requirements defined under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and has included manatee protection provisions under the mitigation proposals for this element of the management alternative. These provisions are found in detail in Appendix B of the Final GMP/EIS. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the provisions of the manatee protection conditions and permanent manatee sign placement procedures found in Appendix B and has concluded in writing (letter from Sandra S. Tucker, Field Supervisor, FWS, Athens, GA dated January 12, 2001) that NPS has met its obligations under Section 7.

SECTION 106 OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

Because Fort Frederica National Monument is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the planning team initiated coordination with the Georgia Historic Preservation Officer during the initial scoping phase of the planning process. This coordination began with a meeting during the week of January 19, 1999 between the planning team, the Superintendent of Fort Frederica and a representative of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division in the National Monument's administrative offices. The process continued with periodic mailings of GMP newsletters, postings on a GMP web site that was linked to the National Monument's web site. Finally, the planning team mailed a copy of the draft GMP/EIS to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for review and comment. The SHPO responded with a letter that pointed out the potential for adverse impacts to archeological resources resulting from the proposed dock on the Frederica River. The letter also pointed out mitigation measures to take before proceeding with any dock construction. The planning team incorporated these measures completely into the description of the alternative and the final EIS.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Fort Frederica General Management Plan public involvement process began the week of January 19, 1999 with internal scoping of issues of concern to the management and staff of the National Monument. During the same week the planning team met with state, local, regional, and federal agencies and private groups including the Georgia Division of State parks and Historic Sites, Georgia Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Historic Preservation Division (State Historic Preservation Officer's representative), the Southeastern Archeological Center of the National Park Service, Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, Glynn County Community Development Office, Coastal Georgia Land Trust, Coastal Georgia Historical Society, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Frederica Association, and several Saint Simons Island garden clubs.

On May 5th and 6th, 1999 public open house scoping sessions were held at the Saint Simons Island Casino (not a gambling facility; this is the name given to a meeting hall owned by the local government) and at the Brunswick Public Library. The open houses were conducted between the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at each location. Seven poster sized displays and maps gave basic information about the National Monument and the planning process and 8.5 X 11 copies of those displays were available for interested persons to take home.

Between March of 1999 and September of 2001, the planning team mailed six newsletters containing updates on the General Management Plan process and progress as well as important contact information to 180 agencies, organizations and individuals. A World Wide Web site of three linked pages for this project went on line in the Spring of 1999. The site consists of general information about the planning process as well as specific information about Fort Frederica, photographs, and an announcements page that has been updated periodically. In October of 2001, the Draft GMP/EIS was made available for public review and comment for a period in excess of 60 days. Public open house meetings to receive comments on the Draft GMP/EIS were held in the Fort Frederica visitor center on November 19 and 20, 2001. The planning team received only

one written comment (from the State Historic Preservation Officer of Georgia) on the Draft GMP/EIS.

CONCLUSION

Among the alternatives considered, the preferred alternative best protects natural and cultural resources of the National Monument while also increasing and improving the range of visitor experiences. In addition, the preferred alternative meets NPS purposes and goals for managing Fort Frederica National Monument and meets national environmental policy goals. The preferred alternative would not result in the impairment of the National Monument's resources and would allow the National Park Service to conserve those resources and provide for their enjoyment by visitors. The officials responsible for implementing the selected alternative are the Regional Director, Southeast Region, and the Superintendent, Fort Frederica National Monument.

Approved:

Jerry Belson
Regional Director, Southeast Region
National Park Service

Date:
